



March 8, 2012

Jeff Gray, Sanctuary Superintendent  
Thunder Bay National Marine Sanctuary  
500 W. Fletcher Street  
Alpena, MI 49707

Dear Mr. Gray,

We are writing as a unified voice of the Northern Michigan Regional Chamber Alliance to express our support for the expansion of Thunder Bay National Marine Sanctuary. We welcome this expansion to the Lake Huron waters off Alpena, Alcona, and Presque Isle Counties because the sanctuary has proven, and will continue to be, a valuable partner in the economic and cultural development of the region.

The sanctuary has been an important economic driver over the past ten years in Northeast Michigan, helping to recast the area as much more than a manufacturing center and wilderness escape. Businesses and the community have seen the benefits of the sanctuary through the development of successful businesses that support heritage tourism and through the research and preservation of our Great Lakes and their rich history. We also understand the value the sanctuary brings to all of Northern Michigan – as it creates just one more great reason for people to spend time here and explore our communities.

This boundary expansion would allow the entire region to project, to the rest of the state and the nation, its well-respected role as an incomparable destination to enjoy some of the country's richest natural and cultural resources. We believe expansion will also enhance the quality of life of the community at large through the sanctuary's many educational, recreational and cultural programs.

We give our full support for the expansion efforts of Thunder Bay National Marine Sanctuary.

Sincerely,

The Members of the Northern Michigan Regional Chamber Alliance:

Alpena Area Chamber of Commerce	Benzie County Chamber of Commerce
Cadillac Area Chamber of Commerce	Charlevoix Area Chamber of Commerce
Gaylord Area Chamber of Commerce	Lake Superior Community Partnership
Petoskey Regional Chamber of Commerce	Traverse City Area Chamber of Commerce

The Northern Michigan Regional Chamber Alliance is a partnership of eight chambers of commerce across northern Michigan, created to advocate legislatively on behalf of our combined 6,500-member job providers in the region. Our interests are consistent across the region, from tax policy and creating a business friendly regulatory environment, to tourism promotion and education excellence.